

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 2708

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP

SUBJ: CODEL DELLENBACK

1. CODEL DELLENBACK VISITED CAIRO APRIL 28-29. A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT COULD BE ARRANGED AT IKING MARYUT, NEAR ALEXANDRIA, SOME THREE-HOURS' DRIVE FROM CAIRO. AMBASSADOR INTRODUCED CODEL TO THE PRESIDENT. MEETING LASTED ABOUT AN HOUR AND WAS INFORMAL, RELAXED AND CORDIAL. SUMMARY OF SUBJECTS DISCUSSED FOLLOWS:

2. OIL EMBARGO: CODEL OPENED BY EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR SADAT'S EFFORTS IN CONNECTION WITH LIFTING OF ARAB OIL EMBARGO. SADAT MODESTLY DISCLAIMED ANY CREDIT, SAYING THAT ACTION WAS APPROVED BY ALL ARAB LEADERS. OIL EMBARGO HAD INITIALLY BEEN IMPOSED TO SIGNAL THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ABOUT DEPTH OF ARAB FEELINGS ON ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM. IT HAD BEEN LIFTED AS RESULT OF NEW US MIDDLE EAST POLICY, WHICH PRESIDENT NIXON, SECRETARY KISSINGER AND HE HAD WORKED OUT. THIS NEW POLICY WAS A GREAT CHANGE FROM THE "BLACK DAYS" OF THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION. THE PRESIDENT RECALLED THAT HE, AS AN EGYPTIAN LEADER, HAD KNOWN AMERICAN SECRETARIES OF STATE FROM DULLES THROUGH ROGERS. NONE, IN HIS VIEW, HAD SHOWN THE VISION, FORESIGHT AND STRATEGIC PERCEPTIONS OF SECRETARY KISSINGER.

3. US-ARAB RELATIONS: THE PRESIDENT INSISTED ALL ARAB LEADERS WANT GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US. EVEN THOSE WHO

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PUBLICLY DENOUNCE US ARE QUIETLY SEEKING TO DEVELOP

CLOSER RELATIONS WITH IT. USG SHOULD SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY. SADAT SAID NEITHER HE NOR ANY ARAB STATE IS ASKING US TO BE AN ALLY. HE WOULD NOT WANT THIS. HE WAS AWARE OF US SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL. THIS IS PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT. ALL HE AND THE ARABS ASKS IS THAT THE USG BE FAIR AND OBJECTIVE. PRESIDENT NIXON AND THE SECRETARY ARE NOW BRINGING THIS ABOUT. IN HIS VIEW, SADAT INDICATED, THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM THREATENING WORLD PEACE IS THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM. IT NEEDS TO BE RESOLVED. THE OCTOBER WAR HAD BROUGHT ABOUT A NEW SET OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTS. THE PRESIDENT CLAIMED HE COULD HAVE DESTROYED THREE ISRAELI CITIES AND LEVELED THEM JUST AS SUEZ HAD BEEN DESTROYED. HE REPEATED WHAT HE HAD TOLD SENATOR HATFIELD (CAIRO 1662). BY DOING SO, HE COULD IMMEDIATELY HAVE MADE A HERO OF HIMSELF IN ARAB EYES. BUT HE HAD NOT DONE SO. HE AND THE SECRETARY HAD BEEN IN TOUCH AND HE HAD RESTRAINED HIMSELF DESPITE STRONG ISRAELI PROVOCATION. SADAT SAID, "I AM A MAN OF PEACE," AND HE HAD THEREFORE OPTED FOR A PEACEFUL ROUTE. CODEL INTERJECTED THAT HE BELIEVES THE ISRAELIS ALSO WANT PEACE.

4. CODEL INDICATED HE HAD VOTED FOR AID TO ISRAEL, BUT HAD FELT AT THE TIME THE USG WAS GIVING TOO MUCH. SADAT REITERATED HE KNEW ABOUT US SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL. THE PRESIDENT STATED THAT HE DID NOT REGARD US SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL AND US FRIENDSHIP WITH THE ARABS AS INCOMPATIBLE. HE WAS SIMPLY ASKING THAT US BE FAIR.

5. ARAB-ISRAELI SETTLEMENT: CODEL ASKED IF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM COULD BE SOLVED. SADAT REPLIED IN AFFIRMATIVE. ASSAD'S SITUATION IS DIFFICULT, BUT HE THOUGHT SYRIANS ALSO WANT DISENGAGEMENT. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS WILL BE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE, BUT IT CAN BE DONE. VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM SHOULD BE HANDLED ONE STEP AT A TIME. IN RESPONSE CODEL'S QUERY, SADAT SAID THAT BECAUSE OF ITS COMPLEXITY, JERUSALEM ISSUE SHOULD BE HANDLED LAST.

6. WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO? CODEL INQUIRED WHAT THE PRESIDENT THOUGHT CONGRESS COULD DO TO FACILITATE THE NEW RELATION-
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SHIP THAT HAS DEVELOPED. SADAT REPLIED THAT THE CONGRESS SHOULD ACT QUICKLY ON WHAT HAS TO BE DONE. HE RECALLED HOW THE SECRETARY HAD SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY WHEN IT PRESENTED ITSELF AND ACTED QUICKLY. AS A RESULT, IN SIX SHORT MONTHS, HE HAD CHANGED THE US-EGYPTIAN RELATIONSHIP FROM ONE OF CONFRONTATION TO ONE OF COOPERATION. IN THE PROCESS SOVIET INFLUENCE, NOT ONLY IN EGYPT BUT IN THE ARAB WORLD, HAD BEEN REDUCED BY 80 PERCENT. EGYPT, THE

PRESIDENT STRESSED, IS THE CENTER OF THE ARAB WORLD AND
WHAT HAPPENS IN EGYPT IS FOLLOWED BY ALL. THE SOVIETS
ARE DESPERATELY SEEKING TO PRESERVE THEIR REMAINING 20
PERCENT OF INFLUCNCE BY HELP TO SYRIA, IRAQ AND OTHERS.
IF THE UNITED STATES RESPONDS QUICKLY, THE PRESIDENT
CONTENDED, THE SOVIETS WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY IN KEEPING
EVEN THIS SMALL PERCENTAGE OF INFLUENCE. THE CONGRESS
SHOULD TAKE THE LESSON OF WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED BY SEIZING
THE OPPORTUNITY. REFERRING TO THE
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